

Serious Conversations by MidnightMadness

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Summary:

Written for the prompt challenge on Tumblr by rarsablack. Prompt:

Person A: I'm trying to have a serious conversation with you!

Person B: And I'm trying to avoid it!

Serious Conversations

Author's Note:

Written for the prompt challenge on Tumblr by rarsablack. Unedited and un-beta'd. Prompt:

Person A: I'm trying to have a serious conversation with you!

Person B: And I'm trying to avoid it!

I haven't edited this, nor is it beta'd. The boys are probably out of character, but it worked for the story so sorry, not sorry.

Enjoy!

It surprised them both when Billy ended up being the more 'mature' one in the relationship. One would have thought that living with Neil Hargrove would have stunted the boy beyond compare, but the constant and painful reminders of '*respectand responsibility*' had Billy growing up pretty fast.

Billy knew how to keep a house clean and organized, cook a meal, handy work, and how to patch mild to moderate injuries with a simple first aid kit. Living with Neil had made Billy grow up, and fast. Billy didn't necessarily pride himself on this skillset, having learned it more out of survival than anything else.

The maturity bled into the relationship side of Billy's life as well. Seeing Neil bottle everything up and then violently explodes taught Billy about everything he *didn't* want to end up as. He knew how to keep his mouth shut about the small issues, and how to address the bigger issues he had with people. Sure, his fists used to do all the talking, but after that one time with Steve, Billy figured out more harm than good came from that style of conflict 'resolution'. In a sickening moment after waking up on the Byers' floor, fuzzy from the drugs, that Billy had the revelation that he was exactly like his father. The last person he ever wanted to be like. It took some work, and a few books nicked from the second-hand bookstore, but Billy learned better ways to confront the problems that he had with people.

Steve, on the other hand, had not. Growing up in the Ritchie Rich lifestyle, Steve had everything at his fingertips. Except for parents that were around regularly. Steve didn't have that. He spent a lot of his home time alone, but without the chore list, and rather than learning to cook, Steve use the generous allowance to order pizza on an almost daily basis.

Emotions weren't Steve's strong suit either. After the breakup with Nancy, where his entire world was thrown upside down with a single, slurred '*bullshit*', Steve didn't really know how to confront the emotional problems he had. After Nancy, it was easier just to shove everything down and avoid it than it was to face the issues head-on.

The relationship between Steve and Billy wasn't perfect, but it was strong. They came together unexpectedly and burned like a wildfire. They bickered, but nothing ever too serious, at the beginning. Then things started piling up, and it went down like this:

The boys were at Steve's house since his parents were once again off...somewhere. One minute, things had been going dandy, some flirting and some jokes, and the next the two were squaring off like two dogs. Neither could even recall what had sparked the fight, but all of a sudden they were at each other's throats.

"What's your fucking issue?" Steve barked, facing Billy and back towards the door. His body radiated tension, but with the undercurrent of unease that was apparent every time that he and Billy fought.

"You're my fucking problem!" Billy shouted, one hand throwing out in a wide gesture in Steve's general direction. "You just....keep fucking doing the same shit over and over!" Billy didn't even know what 'shit' he was referring to, but his emotions were getting the better of him. Steve riled him up like nobody else. Billy took a few deep breaths, hand running through his hair as he consciously tried to modify his stance from aggressive to a more passive one.

"Let's go to the kitchen and have a beer, and talk about this shit like fucking adults." Billy suggested.

"I have to go pick up Dustin." Steve said, shakily. While Billy was calming himself down, Steve had surreptitiously picked up his keys from the side table and was worrying them between his hands. Unbeknownst to Billy, Steve's heart was beating out of his chest, the same sick feeling pooling in his gut that he had had standing in that bathroom with Nancy, being told that he was 'bullshit'.

"This is gonna be it" Steve thought to himself, 'this is the part where Billy's had enough of me and my fuck ups. This is it.'

"What." Billy said, voice emotionless. He couldn't believe this shit Steve was pulling, right now of all times.

"I...need to go pick Dustin up..." Steve repeated, his voice choking out the words. It felt like his throat was closing, the pressure of everything he'd bottled in pushing, clawing to get out. All the insecurities, all of the time he'd been waiting for the other shoe to drop, all of the words he wanted to say but kept locked away out of fear of being too needy, too clingy, *too much bullshit.*

"I'm trying to have a serious conversation with you, and you have to go Pick. Up. Dustin? Are you fucking shitting me?? Unbelievable Harrington. Un-fucking-believable." Billy said, shaking his head derisively. He couldn't believe the shit Steve was pulling. Every time Billy tried to talk about anything remotely serious, Steve hightailed it out of there with some pathetic excuse. It was usually something to do with Dustin, but the most notable was that Steve had to go work on a Chemistry project. (Steve and Billy were in the same Chemistry class, and they had no project.) Shaking his head again, Billy ran both his hand through his hair. He couldn't believe this kid.

Steve heart had simultaneously dropped and leapt into his throat at the same time. Billy hadn't called him 'Harrington' since the very beginning of their...thing. That had to be bad news for Steve. The sick feeling in Steve's gut intensified to the point where he was pretty sure he was going to be sick in his mother's potted plant that was next to him. Steve knew that if he left now, that was the end of it between him and Billy. But Steve also knew that if he stayed, Billy would lay out all of Steve's faults. All of his fuck ups and bad habits, all of the things he did that made him *bullshit.*

"I'm trying to avoid the conversation..." Steve said quietly, almost so quiet that Billy didn't catch it. Steve's shoulders slumped down and forward, the taller boy curling into himself. His head was down, with his fringe hanging down and obscuring his face. It looked as though Steve was trying to curl into himself, making himself as small as he could, as if it would protect him from what was to come.

"If I avoid the conversation you're trying to have, you can't tell me how I've fucked everything up, and everything I'm doing wrong, and how it's all just bullshit." Steve said in the same quiet voice. He refused to look up at Billy and see the confirmation that would undoubtedly be painted across the boy's handsome face. The same look that had been on Nancy's face when it had finally all come out.

Billy was stunned. He couldn't believe what Steve was saying. His goal had been for them to sit down and talk over the issues they were having, to fix them and make them better. And Steve thought talking meant...breaking up? Billy was floored by the revelation. The silence didn't bode well for Steve, who interpreted it as a confirmation of his assumptions of what talking meant. If possible, Steve shrunk even further into himself. His shoulders started to shake with the held in sobs, tears making quiet tracks down his still obscured face. The clawing feeling in Steve's throat was suffocating him, ripping his insides to shreds as Steve tried to keep quiet and keep it all in.

At the sound of a choked sob, Billy looked at Steve and immediately rushed over to him, seeing the other boy curling into himself and looking so small and so hurt.

"Steve, baby, you haven't fucked everything up. We've BOTH made some mistakes." Billy said, arms reaching out to wrap around his sweet boy. Steve shied away, half turning to make himself small as if Billy was going to hurt him. Steve was shaking his head; sobs wracking his frame as he slowly lost control of himself.

Steve was trying to get words out, but the swelling emotions throttled any words that he tried to get out. It was like a dam had broken and the floodgates were open. Steve was falling apart at the seams after trying so hard to keep it together. His knees buckled, and Steve expected to hit the floor in an undignified heap, a visible representation of the pathetic bullshit that he was.

Except strong arms caught him, pulling Steve into a warm chest as both boys sank to the floor. Steve was half in Billy's lap, finally giving in to the need to be comforted, even if the source of comfort was going to rip it all a few in a few minutes time.

Billy wrapped his arms firmly around Steve, one around his waist and the other coming up to cradle the base of the skull. Billy rocked Steve gently, making small shushing sounds. Billy had no idea what had triggered the breakdown, but like hell, he was going to make Steve go through this alone.

After a few minutes, Steve's sobs quieted. With his face still buried in Billy's shoulder, he could pretend that everything was all right for another little bit longer. Billy stroked broad hands up and down Steve's back.

"Wanna talk about this, Pretty Boy?" Billy asked, still keep his arms firmly around the boy in his lap.

"...if we don't have these...talks, you can't tell me how I fucked up. Of how I wasn't enough or right or whatever. Doesn't matter how hard I try, its just all bullshit." Steve choked out. As he started talking, the tears renewed. Steve rubbed his face into Billy's shoulder, trying to hide.

"You are NOT bullshit. WE are NOT bullshit. I don't give two fucks what that cunt said and did, you deserve way better than her." Billy groundout. As Steve called himself bullshit, it all clicked for Billy.

"I'm not breaking up with you. I don't think you've fucked up or anything like that. I wanted us to talk and fix what issues we got going on, because like HELL am I giving you up. You're amazing Stevie, and I wouldn't change you for the world." Billy said, cupping Steve's face and getting those big brown eyes to look into the blue. "You are NOT. BULLSHIT."

The conviction in Billy's voice caught Steve by surprise. Looking into the eyes of the other boy, Steve saw how determined Billy was, how much he willed for Steve to believe him. Bringing their foreheads together, Billy repeated the saying, over and over, trying to put all of his heart into the words and into the eye contact he had with Steve/

Steve nodded slowly, forehead still pressed against Billy's.

"Okay," Steve said, "okay." He pressed a tentative kiss to Billy's lips. Billy kissed back, pulling Steve tighter to himself. While they may not be perfect, like hell Billy was giving up, or letting Steve give up on this. They'd get through this. Because they were NOT bullshit.